

THE

official newsletter of the 124th Fighter Wing

BEACON



COMBAT EXCELLENCE-ALWAYS ON MISSION



FROM THE WING COMMANDER

COL. TIM DONNELLAN

Reintegration - we're finally saying it out loud for the AEF and our earliest RCP deployers! The sole purpose of the special edition of the Beacon is to get those folks who re-deploy home in the coming months to start thinking about what that word will mean. For those of you who have done this a few times before (some of you are on your 8th Combat tour!) you know the drill, especially the part about it never being the same. However, many of you are on your first deployment, and the tone of your entire military career can be set by how well you reintegrate with your families and civilian employers. It's absolutely critical that you think about how you jump back into your civilian life, especially into a home that has been functioning without your daily involvement for over half a year. The articles presented in this edition should help you prepare for the re-introduction to your family, your civilian life, and even your peacetime military life.

You are not the same person you were the day you left, you're not supposed to be. However, your family, civilian employers and co-workers won't see that right away which can cause some frustration. How you deal with that frustration is critical! Great coping mechanisms are things like working out, planning family vacations, social time with friends. Poor ones include excessive alcohol (or worse) consumption and significant time alone. Make plans to work out (hopefully continuing the regimen you had overseas), as well as plans with your family. It doesn't have to be a massive production, sometimes just a long delayed yard project can be enough to get small kids involved and re-acquainted with a deployed parent. Physical fitness with family is also a good idea, whether it's a local mud run, sprint triathlon, or regularly scheduled walks around the neighborhood. The point is this... do something, and do it with those who have counted down the days with you. You won't regret it, and the next time a deployment comes around you'll have a keen sense of how to reintegrate quickly and effectively.

For those of you returning from your first combat tour, you are now part of a small, select group of military veterans. I hope you feel different - that you find yourself standing taller, proud, and are more confident in all you do. You and your families have answered your nation's call, and you will never be the same. Take the time and effort to make that difference a positive one and you'll be stronger for it, I promise.

For those of you returning from yet another combat tour, I can only say I am humbled once again. Take the time to recharge, and as you have done countless times before, enjoy the freedoms you have so diligently worked to protect.

I'm proud of you all and look forward to welcoming you home soon.

Attack!

Donut

FROM THE WING COMMAND CHIEF

CHIEF MASTER SGT. TAMMY LADLEY



It is so exciting to start seeing Airmen trickle in from the deployment. We are preparing to bring the majority of Airmen home in a couple of months. Please keep in mind that even though the majority are coming home we still have a large portion of our MSG deployed. Our Airmen are doing amazing work both at home station and throughout various deployed locations. The accolades continue to come in from the combatant commanders. Members of the Idaho Air National Guard never cease to amaze me with your ability to perform any and every mission you are tasked with.

I ask for your patience as you start to reintegrate back into your everyday life and in-process with the wing. It was no easy task getting you out the door and it will be no easy task getting you home. Please pay attention and make sure you completely in process. This is VERY VERY important! Not doing so correctly could result in an overpayment or potentially cutting your benefits off at the wrong time. The FSS and IDO shops are working a solid plan for your return. Stay patient!

Enjoy your time with your family. We are excited and looking forward to having the majority of you back. Although we have maintained a crazy pace here at home, I personally have missed all the faces of our Airmen who deployed.

To all members who remained at home station ~ THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU! I cannot thank you enough for all the hours, hard work and sacrifices you have contributed to making the largest deployment in the history of the 124th Fighter Wing successful. These sacrifices have afforded the deployed Airmen the opportunity to serve their country and perform their combat mission. Again, thank you!

I want everyone still deployed to know I think of you daily! Keep doing what you are doing. You are making a difference. Stay Focused! You will be coming home soon!

-Chief Ladley

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KEY CONTACT NUMBERS

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208-422-6468 OR 208-541-9723

FAMILY SUPPORT:

208-422-5374 OR 208-599-4758

YELLOW RIBBON:

208-422-6788

ANG DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH:

208-422-5377 OR 208-863-3015

ANG FINANCE OFFICE:

208-422-5848

HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICE (HRO):

208-422-3338

LEGAL:

208-422-5399

AMERICAN RED CROSS:

1-877-272-7337

TRIWEST (TRICARE):

1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378)

ESGR:

208-272-3544

MILITARY ONE SOURCE:

1-800-342-9647 OR MILITARYONESOURCE.MIL

MILITARY FAMILY LIFE CONSULTANT

208-272-8398 OR 208-577-1025

PERSONAL FINANCE COUNSELOR

208-272-8332 OR 208-215-8804


STATE YOUTH COORDINATOR

208-272-8397 OR 208-890-5268

Want the latest and greatest news from the 124th Fighter Wing? Don't wait for the next printed edition of The Beacon. Click below or copy the link into your browser:

bit.ly/getEDGE

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This hotline is available
for members of the 124th
Fighter Wing and their
dependents that would
like to address any
concerns during the
deployment to include any
media concerns or issues
that may arise.

COMMANDER'S HOTLINE
208-422-5000



PERSONAL FINANCIAL COUNSELING

1 Saving

Did you save money during the deployment? What are you planning on doing with the money saved?

2 Pay Cut

Are you going to experience a pay cut? Have you developed a new spending plan for a reduction of income? Do you need to adjust your TSP contributions?

3 Deployment

Did you put an active duty alert or credit freeze on your credit? Should you remove it? Do you still need to file taxes for 2015? Did you take advantage of the SCRA interest rate reduction, what now? Did you reduce your car insurance?

Managing finances can be a daunting task, so why do it alone?

Steve Stech, CFP, can help you and your family manage finances, resolve financial problems, and reach long-term goals such as getting an education, buying a home, and planning for retirement. He provides services, training, and workshops to all the military services, active duty, guard and reserves. Some of the services he provides are budgeting and spending plans, debt and credit management, dealing with collections, deployment financial readiness, savings and investments, mortgages, home buying, preventing foreclosure, retirement planning including the new blended retirement system, basic estate planning, tax planning, insurance, college finances, emergency financial relief, and even security clearance finances.



STEVE STECH, CFP (208) 473-8494

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

PFC.ID.ANG@Zeiders.com

All services are FREE, ANONYMOUS, and CONFIDENTIAL

COMPREHENSIVE AIRMAN FITNESS AS PART OF RESILIENCY

By Col. Jeffery Aebischer
124th Vice Wing Commander



Deployments are tough business for our Airmen and their families. As we begin to look at the reintegration aspects, it is important to review the concepts of maintaining balance between the four main areas of an Airman's life which include the mental, physical, social, and spiritual areas. As stated by Gen Welsh, the previous Chief of Staff of the Air Force, "Our job is to fight and win the nation's wars. We'll never be good enough at it, we've got to get better every day. It's not an easy task, which is why Comprehensive Airman Fitness is so important." Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James stated, "Comprehensive Airman Fitness is a lifestyle and culture that focuses on making sound choices while building a thriving Air Force comprised of comprehensively balanced individuals that are engaged in becoming mentally, physically, socially and spiritually fit."

For the purpose of this article, we will focus on the aspect of being physically fit and how important physical fitness is to being a resilient Airman. As stated by Charles Darwin, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." It is all about being resilient. The Air

Force definition for resiliency is "The ability to withstand, recover and/or grow in the face of stressors and changing demands." Our Airmen endure repeated stressors that do not effect typical civilian families. It is no surprise that one of the biggest stressors our families and Airmen face are related to deployments. The reintegration after deployments is also seen as a particularly stressful time. A key coping mechanism in dealing with these types of stressors is a good physical fitness routine.

Physical activity can provide significant benefits to physical health and can buffer the negative effects created by stress. It will also promote better sleep, protect against depression and anxiety, and increase self-esteem. Based on personal reading and experience, I would like to offer the following ideas related to a healthy physical fitness routine. A one hour period of moderate activity three to four times a week is a good place to start. A good workout routine should include a combination of strength training, aerobic activity and stretching to maintain a healthy and balanced level of fitness. As with most things in life, too much of a good thing can be a bad thing so don't overdo it, especially for those of us with a few extra years under

our belt. Maxing out on the bench or leg press is not going to be worth the joint replacement surgery and rehab time that will likely come later in life. Choose weights that can be lifted 10 to 12 repetitions before muscle failure. Find an aerobic activity you enjoy like running, cycling, or rowing that will elevate your heart rate for a 20 to 30 minute period. Short intervals of 80% effort throughout your aerobic workout will also help mix things up a little and increase the benefits from your workout. Always include some stretching in your workouts both before and after to help your muscles avoid injury and increase overall flexibility. The key is to find a routine that works for you and stick with it. A good fitness plan will help you to be a resilient Airman, ready and able to fight and win our nation's wars.

It has been a pleasure to see members returning to Idaho and being reunited with their loved ones. I look forward to welcoming more of our returning members in the coming months. Those of you that are still out fighting the fight, take care of yourselves and one another. We think of you all daily and the amazing job you are doing in each of the deployed locations. Keep accomplishing your mission, and we await the return of all 124th Fighter Wing members!

Striking Contrast

By Col. Shannon Smith
124th Operations Group Group

Laurie and I found ourselves sharing a relaxing Sunday brunch today on Bannock in downtown Boise. From a distance, a passerby observing the scene would note nothing remarkable- a couple sharing a meal. Remarkable except that the gentleman had his phone out, how rude. What the passerby wouldn't see and couldn't hear was that the message being read on the phone: 190EFS SITREP... # of A-10 Sorties: 10... Ordnance Expended: GBU-31: 1, GBU-38: 0, GBU-54: 1, GBU-12: 2, AGM-65: 1, 30MM: 450, AGR-20: 1... What the passerby wouldn't know and maybe couldn't fathom was the striking contrast of the moment: brunch at a sunny summer bistro and a brief window into another day in combat far, far away.

While I'm very capable of being rude, at this particular moment, my phone was also out to take notes. You see, I had an article to write for our Beacon and I was interviewing Laurie about the family experience of combat deployments. I wanted to share her perspective with all of you. If you're interested or the least bit intrigued, I invite you to read on- join us.

What's the hardest part about deployments?

The absence... you're gone and it's very real. There's a void in my life, our family, our routines. It's hard not having access. To talk to you when I want, to share moments, fleeting moments only shared by presence.

Let's talk about the phases of a deployment. What are your first thoughts when you think of each phase?

How about the beginning?

Oh, it starts before then. It starts in the lead-up. There's such expectation for that time, that it must be special. Sensitivities are heightened. You want everything to be perfect. For you I can see guilt that you're leaving us, that you'll miss things and that maybe you're letting us down by leaving. I don't want you to feel that so I try to compensate- show you I got this. The stress eventually seems to win though. We have good moments for sure but then... we're just ready- just go already, let's get this done so we can get it finished!

And the first week?

Anxiety for your safe travel. Then it's all about finding the new routine, filling the void. The void is real. It's your presence and responsibilities. Your role is one of the main ingredients in our family recipe- how do I substitute that? It's a new schedule. At first, it's all jacked up. I don't go to bed because those quiet times are the times when the void is obvious. Staying busy helps. For sure there's an emotional peak and for sure, there's emotional fractures.

How about the long haul in the middle... what's it like sustaining that?

The new normal has set in. I put effort into avoiding the vulnerable alone time. When we communicate, I try to keep the conversation safe. I don't want you to worry or feel you have to make decisions for us back here. If it's big stuff then I'll share but I want to carry those things. I don't want you to feel bad for not being with us. Parenting is tough, I'm not you. The way I parent with you is not the way I parent alone. Being a single parent is just tough. Sustaining means thriving as much as I can. Our family finds a way to continue in your absence- some pieces of the void are filled- they have to be because life goes on.

When does it feel like you can make it, that it's over and you can see the light at the end?

I don't know... the last day maybe. The last few weeks there's anxiety. A lot of it comes as the reality of progress made on goals set at the beginning of the deployment sets in. I wanted to lose ten pounds. I meant to paint our bedroom. Does the lawn look like you like it? There's lots of running around to make things, well-

perfect. There's anxiety too about what's changed. Are we still ok? All I've had for six months is your virtual face. These are silly anxieties because I love you and I know you love me... but still. It seems like it's been so long. After all these deployments, I know I have to prepare to give back some control. Our family has to make space for you. When you left there was a void. In many ways, we had to fill some of it in. When you return, we don't cut those things out but we do make new space. I worry sometimes, that you'll be disappointed in how we've gotten by. The decisions I've made. My style of solo-parenting, the color of the front door I painted. Will you be upset that I spend more time with some revitalized friendships I've made while you were gone? With all that though, there's excitement for that homecoming.

Right! Let's talk about that day. What's that like?

Pure, unadulterated, unabashed excitement and joy. It can't come fast enough. If you get back in the morning, everything's good. If it's later in the day then EVERYTHING takes too long... If your flight is slipped, every step you take on the flight line closing the distance, every breath... takes too long!

If you're still with us, enjoying the conversation and sipping that coffee press coffee, it just got a little awkward because well- Laurie just teared up and I got misty eyed (fighter pilots don't cry). You see that homecoming moment is precious and priceless. The memory of those are as clear for us as the present moment.

Whew... so I think they want this table back, we should probably finish. How about the first week home, what's that like?

Hard... Love it, it's good! You're back! But it can be hard. It's good transitioning back. It's a transition of giving things back. Not filling the void, we're past that. It's more, making space and room. That void is a layer in our family, it makes us who we are. There's certainly relief. It's nice to have you here. To be two parents. To have you be the disciplinarian, mow the lawn, do some dishes. There's some nervousness of intimacy... in a good way. Like those first dates and seeing you with fresh and appreciative eyes...

Laurie, hold on a second.

If you're still with us, maybe you ought to go find the waitress, maybe get the bill?... I didn't see that part coming...

I want you to be happy with how we've managed, be proud of the decisions we've made and appreciate our journey while you were gone. That first week is also helping the kids reset. Papa's home.

This was great. I feel like I can write an article from this. Is there any advice you would give a family experiencing their first deployment?

Be patient. If you are the one returning home, appreciate the initial strangeness of the reunion and reintegration. Be a guest in your home. Observe and take in the reactions to your being home. Don't feel pressured to make decisions or assert your presence. That will come. Understand things have changed. Accept that things are different because you weren't there. See the void filled as a blessing of strength and perseverance. The change in your kids will feel like light-years, you'll catch up! Give them space to "see" you. Don't be afraid of the initial awkwardness, it's natural. All the awkwardness and newness- it's normal, it's good and it's part of the process of reintegration.

Thank you, that was really good!

You're welcome... you're not going to use that part about intimacy are you?

Combat deployments can be a real strain on your family. Understanding the striking contrast in the lives you've led while apart will go a long way in helping you appreciate the complexity of reintegrating the close relationships in your life.

Thank you all for allowing me to share my family's experience with combat deployments. When citizens of this great country thank you for your service, they're thanking the whole family for their strength, sacrifice and courage. Strength to endure voids created, sacrifice in keeping the family together despite the fragments and courage to rebuild, better for the experience.

"Be patient with your reintegration"... wise words. Thanks Laurie!

THE WORK GOES ON AT HOME



MANAGING CHANGE DURING AND AFTER DEPLOYMENT

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” -Socrates

The one thing that is consistent is that with deployment stressors and reunion on the horizon, there may be a wave of various emotions linked to the fear of how things might be different. It can also be an extremely exciting time. Simply not knowing what the new dynamics within the family unit will be can cause stress.

Each family will have their own unique challenges. Amanda Friend, an Idaho Air National

Guard member, states, “Learning how to begin sharing the roles and authority in the family can become very real points of contention, leading to fighting and frustration.” According to an article published in the National Center for PTSD, “Each service member will have their own experiences, however, understand that almost all service members will need time to re-adjust after being in a war zone.” The first few months could be

intense and common stress reactions are normal when readjusting. Some reactions you may notice include: trouble sleeping, being agitated, easily upset, having trouble concentrating and overly concerned about safety.

Very positive reactions can occur as well. A sense of self confidence, pride in themselves and their family or more appreciation to spending quality time with those they love can also be noticed after deployment.

Here are some suggestions that might help with the reintegration process:

- Discuss with your service member before their return how you’ll handle balance of work, home responsibilities, and leisure time for both of you.
- Educate yourself about what to expect and think about how you’ll cope.
- Take care of yourself.
- Talk to other people who have experienced the return of service members.

-When to seek help-

If problems become persistent, one or both of you are defensive, overly critical, verbally abusive, blaming or a solution can’t be uncovered - counseling or mediation might help.



Patrica DeBor

Director of Psychological Health

208-422-5377 or patricia.l.debor.civ@mail.mil

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and have been supporting military members and their families since 2010. There is no fee for my services, I am full-time and on base during drill.

-Additional References-

<http://afterdeployment.dcoe.mil/>

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/

<http://www.health.mil/News/Articles/2016/05/02/Take-the-first-step-to-ward-better-mental-health>

Article adapted and revised from: Returning from the War Zone, A Guide for Families and Military Members



By Col. Stephanie L. Sheppard
124th Mission Support Group

Deployers from the 124th Mission Support Group continue to provide spectacular combat support in multiple locations around the globe. As the aviation/maintenance folks prepare to return home and reintegrate with families, the Reserve Component Package members which mostly include Airmen from the Mission Support Group, are in various stages of deployment.

In the Logistics Readiness Squadron, members are leading the way in the delivery fuels for Operation INHERENT RESOLVE. Under the leadership of MSgt Corey Gates and MSgt Brian Hain, 30 team members from various military installations across the United States formed a well-oiled team (no pun intended!). Not only do they fuel various assets, they sample several petroleum, oils, and lubricants for potential contaminants using technical testing protocols. Meanwhile, at another deployed location, MSgt Shawn Rebholz from the Traffic Management Office has been operating heavy equipment

to include the latest generation Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV).

In the Communications Flight our cyber warriors continue to keep our system running smoothly. After you spend time reintegrating with your family, friends and community, don't forget to reintegrate into your IT systems. There is potential for some of your accounts to be disabled, passwords expired, and your training to be lapsed. CF will try to pre-identify any areas where we can enable services or provide proactive support! Be sure to let your custodians know your deployed communication equipment (laptops/radios/etc) have returned. Additionally, if your equipment was reprogrammed or utilized at the deployed location, be sure to get CF the devices quickly so we can conduct our preventative maintenance inspections and software/encryption updates. Lastly, if you find yourself in possession of a SIPR token you no longer need (you do not have

a corresponding ANG SIPR account) kindly return it to CF.

Security Forces Squadron members are keeping their bases, aircraft, and fellow troops safe! July 11-13, 2016, the Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, visited their location. MSgt Dean Sampo was the flight chief overseeing operations during the visit and was instrumental in not only coordinating police units to Carter's aircraft, but also maintaining safety on the flight line and through entry control points. In addition, SSgt Eric Sonderman assisted the K-9 team in securing the escort vehicles and living quarters on and off base, ensuring they were free from IED's prior to the his visit. Both defenders received coins from Carter for their excellent efforts. Another congratulations is due to SrA Tarrin Almanza who was coined by General Orcutt, the 380th Wing Commander for performing his duties with professionalism.

The Civil Engineer Squadron departed during July to various overseas locations. Some challenges they faced were finding sleeping space due to the six month swap out. Congratulations to TSgt Trever Bohling on his promotion which took place on Aug. 16. Lt Col Williams, from the 124 Logistics Readiness Squadron, presided over the ceremony. Williams is currently serving as the 577 Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron Com-

mander. Other members serving in the 577 EPBS have been forward deployed to other locations throughout their AOR. Williams said it has been a rewarding job because his teams are greeted with smiling faces and supportive attitudes.

Members of the Force Support Squadron continue to excel at their deployed locations. Our seasoned NCOs in personnel are engaged in PERSCO activities responsible for processing

and tracking all personnel at their location. MSgt Bonnie Davis is the protocol NCOIC at her location, excelling at her duties being responsible for all visiting dignitaries. All FSS members, deployed and home station, continue to live by our fighter wing motto of "First Class or Not at All". FSS out processed the last RCP deployment member of our wing Aug. 20. The Installation Deployment Office and FSS are plan-

ning the in-processing line for the returning deployers. In the past, the member would have to return to base several times following a deployment to meet all in processing requirements. For larger groups of returning deployers, we are combining all stops (medical, finance, etc) in one location as soon as they land. This will complete all of the in-processing at one time and allow for the service member maximum family time.

To the Mission Support Group deployed

Continue to be the amazing and skilled professionals you are! You are proving that the Total Force concept is alive and well and it definitely works!

To the Mission Support Group at home

You are keeping the mission running despite operating with half the manpower resources. Your creative methods of solving problems are critical in getting the job done!

To the Mission Support Group families

I hope you have taken advantage of the activities available to you and that you have drawn strength and support from these events. As always, your contacts below remain poised to help if needed.

-Col. Stephanie Sheppard

Family Member's Contact Numbers for the Mission Support Group

Logistics Readiness Squadron

Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Gibson 208-422-5573
Master Sgt. Leroy Armbruster 208-422-6191

Security Forces Squadron

Master Sgt. Timothy Davidson or
Senior Master Sgt. Eugene Rosin 208-422-5897

Communications Flight

Master Sgt. Aileen Castro 208-422-5840

Civil Engineer Squadron

Lori Roudenbush 208-751-3623

Force Sustainment Squadron

Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Hinshaw 208-422-5375



Deployments tend to set the stage for turmoil and regimented chaos on both ends of the spectrum; here at home for families and at the deployed location(s) for the service member. There are many variables to contend with during a deployment and the only constants appear to be change! I applaud our members and families for the continued resilience and a sense of duty we are all proud of in the State of Idaho. For some families the deployment timeline has only started...for others the countdown is getting shorter. In either case, pat yourselves on the back for the support,

love and concern you have exhibited to date and will continue to exhibit in the future.

The thought for today is on the word "touchstone". One definition of this word is "a standard by which something is judged". The standard for majority of our military men and women is their home, family and loved ones. This is magnified during an extended deployment. The deployed member holds on dearly to the "touchstone" of family and their home surroundings. The picture many of them hold on to during a deployment this "mental snapshot" of all the things dear

to them. This is what sustains them in many ways and gets them through the time that they must be away.

Understanding this brief perspective may assist families as they prepare for reunions. This deployment cycle is one of the longest and largest in the Idaho ANG history. Parties on both sides of the deployment cycle have had to sacrifice. As a reunion nears, please take a pause to reflect on the "touchstones" you hold dear. Embrace what matters and remain flexible for the readjustment period that follows all deployments.

Some tips that may be helpful during this reintegration phase:

- Returning members will remember how it was and may be a little confused on how it is now
- Make and take some down time...readjust to yet another new normal
- Decide who gets the remote control
- Plan no immediate trips or celebrations for the first few weeks
- Both parties need to be aware that no one had it tougher...but together you were able to succeed
- Applaud your support networks and thank them (all parties concerned)
- Kids are resilient and will tend to have reunion on their terms...understand that and respect it

For many in our unit this is yet another deployment...for a large group it is their first. Deployments can be building blocks or stumbling blocks. Hopefully the building blocks created will further cement the "touchstones" we all hold dear. Go out there and make it a Great Day!

-John A. Spurney

124th Fighter Wing Airman and Family Program Manager



For more information on reunion / reintegration contact our Family Program office at 208 422 5374

124TH FIGHTER WING

Emergency Notification

IF YOU NEED TO CONTACT A
DEPLOYED FAMILY MEMBER
IN THE EVENT OF AN
EMERGENCY
THAT REQUIRES THEIR
IMMEDIATE PRESENCE

CONTACT THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
24HR HOTLINE
AT

1-877-272-7337

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS HELPFUL

- SERVICE MEMBERS RANK AND PAY GRADE-
- SERVICE MEMBERS NAME-
- SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER-
- SERVICE BRANCH-
- UNIT-
- ZIPCODE/APO/FPO-
- DUTY PHONE/HOME PHONE-



REINTEGRATION

By Col. Brandon Issacs
124th Medical Group

A significant number of us have been involved in the deployment and have fully immersed ourselves in the war efforts with no other area of focus during that time. This is challenging as a guard member when we are otherwise engaged in civilian work and family issues, often quite different from our active duty counterparts. We, as a unit, have in true guard fashion stepped up to the plate and performed admirably. We have all excelled and continue to excel in so many ways far and above the expectations of those who have been observing us. We as a whole took it upon ourselves to prove to the DoD that we could in true spirit of the minuteman mentality perform at levels unsurpassed. Congratulations to all those who served or are continuing to serve in the war effort.

Something challenging that many are facing or will soon face is the reintegration into our home/ civilian lives. We work so hard, putting ourselves in harm's way, often putting our lives on the

line for what we believe in, even surviving a "coup" attempt; then return to the relative safety of our home lives upon redeployment to home station. This creates a mental shift often difficult to manage. As a physician and commander I have seen over and over where those who have been put in charge of their piece of the war machine have difficulties both physically and mentally as they return to their civilian lives. Those challenges surface sometimes long after their return. At times, we find it difficult to piece together the reasoning and objectives behind what was required of us while deployed which creates a mental shift we have to incorporate into our personal philosophy.

In addition to the challenge of sorting out the transition in our minds when we return to our daily lives, and trying to return to schedules as they were before the deployment, almost as if it never happened, there is also the physical move, time zone changes and unpredictable nature of

departures and travel; all stressors which should not be underestimated. We have to acknowledge that the deployment and our part in it did, in fact happen, and we often will be changed forever because of the experience. Often it will seem like a dream. Hopefully those changes are a catalyst for the better.

Our civilian counterparts, family members or coworkers will never fully understand what it is that we do unless they have experienced it themselves. They do try however and for that we give them credit. Many, while deployed have unrealistic expectations that life will resume just as it was before they left. We must remember that life goes on in our absence. This also contributes to the difficulties with managing the mental shift we have to deal with. Many have been physically injured while in the line of duty creating even greater challenges. We have witnessed death and destruction, the casualties of battle. There also may have been things

that happened at home while we were away that we did not have any control over or in normal circumstances we could have had an effect on, which could have significant impact on the future. This may produce feelings of guilt or other stresses.

There are some who while deployed lost a significant other or family member through death, divorce or abandonment. It is key to remember that while deployed life goes on either there or at home and changes occur both for the worse and/or for the better. Give yourself time to be human and acknowledge the feelings you have during the reintegration process. Understand that you are not the only one going through the transition and that there are

others with similar thoughts. You would be surprised how many and no, it is not a sign of weakness. Also make an effort to avoid the “woulda, coulda, shoulda” mentality because living in the past is not a solution, rather best to acknowledge, work through it and move on using whatever resources are available and needed. What happened is done no matter what, and it is key to understand that, deal with it and move on using the experience to grow. For many it will be easy, but for more it will be a challenge.

The key to successful reintegration both physically as well as mentally is to acknowledge that we are human and the experiences we faced were more than any others could ever possibly under-

stand. We must give ourselves the time and effort to return both physically as well as mentally. If it becomes a challenge, there are resources available to access and assist in the recovery of what is normal for each of us. Please feel free to contact the base chaplain, our mental health counselor or our health care office at any time to assist in your return to civilian life.

Congratulations on a job well done! We have all shown just how valuable we as a unit are to the overall war effort and we are proud of the efforts put forth. I am very grateful to have participated as well. For those still deployed... continue to fight the fight like the true warriors we are and we await your safe return.



THINGS CHANGE



As the 124th looks forward to the successful completion of the largest deployment in the wing's history, suddenly the thought of reintegration comes to mind. While coming home is easier to look forward to it does have its concerns. As an example take a look at how returning astronauts are treated. In their line of work they perform activities in a hostile environment, space, in a confined settings a mere 210 miles away from home, in this case the earth, for periods lasting from weeks to months. They have the finest technology and support that is available, but like us they are human. Recognizing this, NASA takes steps to help returning astronauts reintegrate both physically and mentally. To do this not only do astronauts endure regimented physical activities to adjust to gravity but they also undergo counseling to adjust to family life once again. This may seem unnecessary, but in reality it is vital. With that as a backdrop let's take a look at what the members of the 124th have been doing and contrast it with a space mission. The members of the 124th have been working in a confined area, check. Twenty-six hundred miles from home, check. In a hostile environment, check. Deployed for six solid months, check. While the physical laws of nature are the same for them, like the astronauts, have been away dealing with unique circumstances for months on end and as expected things at home have changed.

In the words of Stephen Chbosky "Things change. And friends leave. Life doesn't stop for anybody." Over the entire span of man's existence this has been and always will be the case. The key to reintegration is not to expect the world to have stopped but instead to embrace the changes and move forward. By taking this mindset we can avoid the common pitfalls that occur when a loved one returns from an extended absence. By preparing oneself to recognize that our families have changed we can mentally be ready to explore and discover those differences and thus also make us more accepting of what we find. This acceptance makes the reintegration process exponentially easier and can even lead to stronger relationships and greater trust. So, as summer bleeds into fall and the excitement of the deployment fades, take the challenge to find what has changed and take pride in that fact that while you were

-Col. Scott Salois, 124th Maintenance Group Commander



The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a Department of Defense wide program designed to support national guard and reserve members, their families and the community. This is done by connecting members and their loved ones with local, state and federal resources throughout the deployment cycle. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program in Idaho has evolved to better meet the needs of our members, based on feedback from ANG leadership, ANG members and their families. Information concerning health care, education benefits,

training opportunities, financial, employment and legal benefits are just some of what the program offers. Access to resources and training on stress management, communication and relationships are among many other services offered.

A Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Post Deployment/During Deployment event is scheduled for 24 Sept 2016 at Fort Boise Senior Activities Center. The reintegration program will focus on the members who have recently returned from deployment of 90 days or more, while the “during deployment” will be

geared toward family members of those who deployed after 1 May 2016. However, all families of deployed members are invited to attend. This post deployment event will focus on reintegration support to ANG members and their families. The reintegration support will consist of, but not limited to; VA benefits, counseling services, education benefits, financial counseling, reintegrating with family, community and employment. The Post Deployment event is a bi-law requirement for military members and recommended for family members.

Additional events will be scheduled this winter and spring to meet the needs of all of our returning members and their families.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have regarding the Yellow Ribbon Program.

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